

# THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

## North America before 1770

### Native Americans

- they originally came to America from \_\_\_\_\_ sometime after 30,000 BC
- they settled in
  - Central America - **the Aztecs, the Maya**
  - South America - **the Incas**
  - North America
    - southwestern tribes e.g. the **Pueblos, Navajos, Apaches**
    - southern tribes e.g. the **Cherokees**
    - northeastern tribes e.g. the **Hurons, Ottawas, Powhatans, Tuscaroras, the Iroquois** Confederacy (five tribes, e.g. the Mohawks)

### “Discovering” America

- Norwegian Vikings - **Leif Eriksson** - around 1,000 BC, archaeological evidence
- in \_\_\_\_\_ a sailor from Genoa \_\_\_\_\_ reached the island of San Salvador
- 1494 - **Treaty of Tordesillas** divided the new territories
- **Amerigo Vespucci** - made the public aware of the new continent
- for a long time Europeans called America \_\_\_\_\_
- also 1497 - **John Cabot** explored Newfoundland
- 1513 - **Vasco Nunez de Balboa** crossed the Isthmus of Panama

### Colonization

- the conquest began at Puerto Rico by the Spanish
- smallpox was introduced to the New World by the conquistadors
  - 1519 - **Hernan Cortez** lands in Mexico and in 1521 destroyed the Aztec capital \_\_\_\_\_
  - on his second exploration of Peru in 1529, **Francisco Pizarro** attacked the Inca Empire and in 1533 he destroyed the Inca Empire

### TASK 1:

Using a historical atlas, write down the locations of:

- **Spanish colonies**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **French colonies**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Dutch colonies**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **English colonies**

## English colonies

- the first colonized territory was named after Queen Elizabeth I \_\_\_\_\_
- the first settlement was established on Roanoke Island in 1584-1587 by sir \_\_\_\_\_ but the colonists mysteriously disappeared - **“the Lost Colony”**
- 1607 - **Jamestown** colony founded
- 1620 - Puritan refugees sailed from Plymouth on a ship called \_\_\_\_\_ and landed in Massachusetts Bay. They are traditionally called the \_\_\_\_\_. During the first winter (harsh cold, scurvy, malnutrition) they were rescued by the Indians (Pokanokets) and they celebrated **the first Thanksgiving**. So, the **Massachusetts Bay Colony** was founded.
- another Puritan colony in Massachusetts was \_\_\_\_\_ which became infamous for the witch hunts

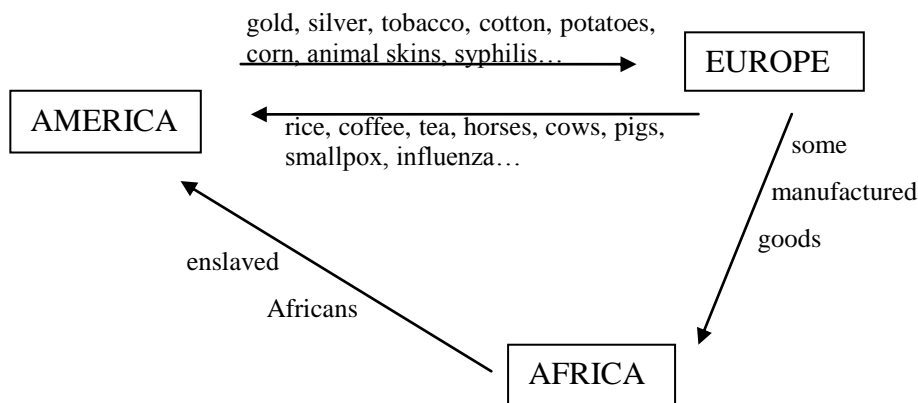
## Expansion of the English in North America

- the English soon started spreading and conquering other countries' colonies:
- 1670s-1720s - wars in the south against the southern Indian tribes, conquering **Florida**
- 1689-1697 - first struggles between England and France in **New England** and **New York**
- 1702-1713 - **Queen Anne's War** - England fights France and Spain (as a part of the War of Spanish Succession)
- one of the last big conflicts which disturbed the colonies was **the Seven Years' War** where the British fought the \_\_\_\_\_

Why they all fought for the colonies:

## Economy of the colonies

- the American colonies produced many things the Europeans valued very much, for example:
- the colonies became part of the so-called **Triangular trade** between Europe, Africa and America



## The Causes of the War of Independence

The **Thirteen colonies** – the original thirteen colonies which later became the founder members of the USA

**TASK 2: Using your atlas write down the names of the Thirteen colonies:**

### English colonial policy

- 1651 – 1696 - a series of **Navigation Acts** passed by the English Parliament - the colonies were to serve as a source of raw materials and a market for English goods. Also, foreign merchants were forbidden to trade with the colonies and only British ships could enter American ports (monopoly on the trade with the colonies)
- To keep its political, legal and economic superiority, Britain passed more limitation acts.
- After the Seven Years' War Britain was financially exhausted and imposed higher taxes on the colonies:
  - the **Sugar Act** (1764)
  - the **Stamp Act** (1765)
  - the **Declaratory Act** (1766) - British Parliament declared its right to pass laws and impose taxes on the colonies
    - The American colonists called this "**Taxation without representation.**"
  - And other import **taxes** were introduced on - glass, lead, paper, **tea**, etc.
- All these things that the colonists to be angry and tense towards the British.
- to keep the colonies obedient Britain kept soldiers there

### 5 March 1770 – the Boston Massacre

In reaction to this, more British troops were sent to Boston.

Later, most of the import taxes (glass, etc.) were abolished, except the duty on tea.

May 1773 – **the Tea Act** - The East India Company was given the monopoly on the American tea market.

### 16 December 1773 - the Boston Tea Party

As a result of that, more troops arrived in Boston and martial law was imposed. Moreover, the British also reacted with **the Intolerable Acts (1774)** – Boston harbour was closed to shipping, Massachusetts colonial charter was annulled, British colonial officers were protected from colonial courts by sending them for trial to Britain, the Americans had to house British troops in private homes etc.

The Americans now reacted - **September 1774 - the First Continental Congress** – in **Philadelphia** - voices of opposition to the British Parliament. Here, the representatives of the **Thirteen colonies, except Georgia** decided to stand up and create a colonial army of the "**Minutemen**" and series of armouries (e.g. in Concord).

Another voice - **Thomas Paine** in his *Common Sense*.

# The War of Independence 1775 - 1783

**TASK 3: In American history, the events are called the War of Independence whereas in British textbooks you can find the American Revolution. Explain the reason for the different titles.**

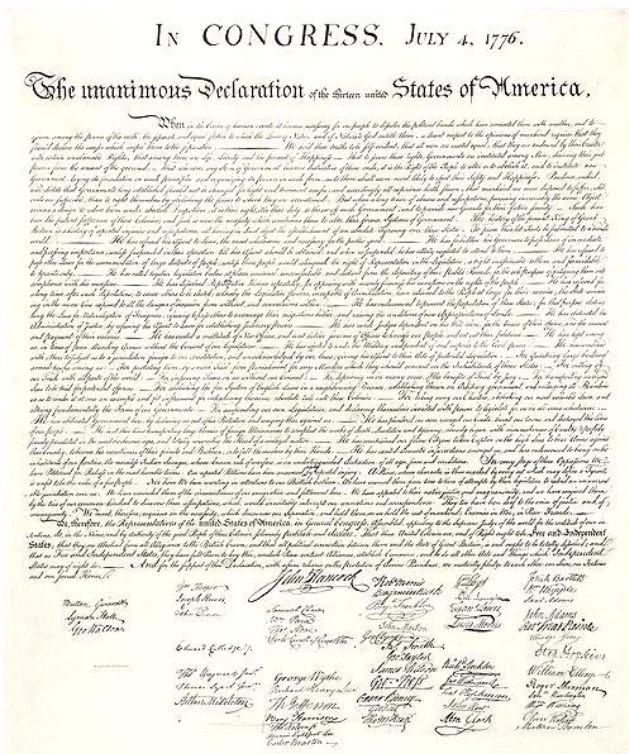
## The events of the war

- 1775 – the governor of Boston heard about the armoury at Concorde so he launched a surprise attack but the colonists were alerted soon enough
- April 1775 – first shots were fired at **Concorde and Lexington**
- June 1775 - \_\_\_\_\_ was appointed **Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army**
- Boston was under British siege
- June 1775 - battle of **Bunker Hill** - a victory for the British but their general Clinton wrote about it: “A few more such victories would have surely put an end to British dominion in America.”

## TASK 4:

**What do we call such a victory which costs us too much?**

- **July 4, 1776** – at the **Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia**, the **Declaration of Independence** was signed. Its author was **Thomas Jefferson** (it was signed by the **Founding Fathers**, e.g. Benjamin Franklin).



*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.*

## TASK 5: Read the Declaration of Independence above

- underline the ideas you find most important.
- in the opening phrase, does “all men” really refer to “all people”? Or is anybody excluded? Why do you think this is?

- At first, in 1776, the British were pushed out of Boston. But then the situation turned and they got New York and Philadelphia.
- A lot of the fighting was done in Canada, too.
- 1777 - battle of **Saratoga** - Americans offered an armistice, so the fighting then shifted more to the south.
- the British entered Philadelphia
- Also, The colonists were supported by foreign troops, e.g. from \_\_\_\_\_ (in 1777, La Fayette volunteered) and later also by Spain (1779) and Holland (1780). France also signed a treaty of friendship and trade with America.

**TASK 6: Why would these European countries support the Americans in their struggle?**

- **October 1781 - battle of Yorktown - the British general Cornwallis surrendered** and an armistice was signed
- **Sep 3, 1783 - peace treaty at Versailles** and American **independence was recognized by Britain**

**TASK 7:**

**Which of the following reasons do you think were the six most important for Britain's defeat in the American War of Independence? Put them in order of importance. Be careful, not all the reasons are correct!**

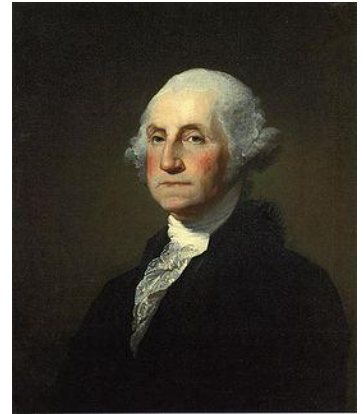
- George Washington was a very able commander for the colonists.
- British commanders were incompetent.
- George III (the British king) was mad.
- Britain used Indian (native American) soldiers.
- No Americans supported Britain and none remained neutral.
- Britain was fighting a war three thousand miles away, without good communication.
- France and Spain both helped America.
- Many British soldiers were German mercenaries.
- The American soldiers were more motivated to fight.
- Canada supported the Americans.
- All American soldiers fought with great skill and bravery.
- American soldiers usually knew the countryside better than the British soldiers.
- Quite a few British people supported the Americans.





## The United States of America

- The American now faced a new challenge - **How should the new state be run?** The Treaty of Versailles granted them independence but there was no president and no real government.
- soon the politicians divided into two distinctive groups:
  - **Federalists** - e.g. George Washington, their main idea was a strong and centralized US government, predecessors of today's Republicans
  - **Antifederalists (Democratic Republicans)** - e.g. Thomas Jefferson, predecessors of today's Democrats, they wanted the individual states to maintain some autonomy
- **1781 - the Articles of Confederation** – they formed the real USA and were the first stage of the constitutional development - but did not work very well – it required all thirteen states to agree on any decision to be made, this led to six years of deadlock
- **1787 – the US Constitution** (ratified in 1789)  
Today the US Constitution consists of a Preamble, seven Articles and twenty-seven Amendments.  
**TASK 8:**
  - a. **What is the role of the Amendments? Why are there so many?**
  - b. **Do you know any famous Amendments to the US Constitution?**



George Washington

- **1789 - \_\_\_\_\_ became the first US president.**
- However, the disputes with Britain were not over yet and led to the **Anglo-American War (1812 – 1814)**, as a result of which Great Britain accepted US sovereignty but defended its Canada.
- Moreover, the American War of Independence served as an inspiration for the French Revolution which started in 1789.
- Also, in 1889 the French people gave the USA the famous **Statue of Liberty**, on the anniversary of their independence. The inscription on the statue reads: *“The huddled masses yearning to be free...”*

### **TASK 9:**

**The American flag is familiarly called “Stars and Stripes.”**

**What do the stars and the stripes represent?**





INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

**REVISION:**

**TASK 10:**

**What nationalities were the main colonizers of North America? Which parts did they take?**

**TASK 11:**

**Explain the Triangular Trade and its significance.**

**TASK 12:**

**What were the most important long-term and short-term causes of the War of Independence?**

**TASK 13:**

**What do the Americans celebrate on July 4<sup>th</sup>?**

**TASK 14:**

**Describe the basic structure of the American political structure.**